

Washington, DC - The newly established Congressional Labor and Working Families Caucus, chaired by Congresswoman Linda Sánchez and which is aimed at protecting workers rights, sent a letter today to the Leadership in the House and the Senate directing them not to cut workers overtime pay during these difficult economic times in our country.

The House and Senate Leadership are currently working out the differences between their two versions of the annual Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriations bill. One of the primary provisions of the Senate version was an amendment added by Senator Tom Harkin to forbid the Bush Administration from eliminating overtime pay for millions of workers. The House version does not include this provision. Today, the Working Families Caucus, which consists of 76 Members of the House of Representatives, sent a letter to the Leaders of the House-Senate committee working on the bill directing them to adopt the Senate provision protecting overtime pay.

"For many hard-working men and women, including our first responders, overtime pay is not spare change. It helps families pay the mortgage, feed their kids, pay for college and save for retirement," stated Congresswoman Linda Sánchez. "In this economy especially, we can not let the Bush Administration shortchange our working families."

The Bush Administration proposed new rules in March 2003 to change the Fair Labor Standards Act to enable employers to reclassify many workers currently eligible for overtime as managers, administrative or professional employees who are exempt from time-and-a-half overtime pay. This would eliminate overtime protection for large numbers of aerospace, health care, defense, high tech and other workers.

Over 8 million workers could be impacted by the Bush Administration overtime restrictions. A copy of the letter sent to the Leaders of the House-Senate conference Committee on the Labor-HHS Appropriations bill is attached, along with a list of the House Labor and Working Families Caucus Membership.